



FAMILIES AFIELD:

OPENING THE DOOR TO THE NEXT GENERATION
OF AMERICAN HUNTERS

Prepared By:
The U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance
January 2013

Families Afield

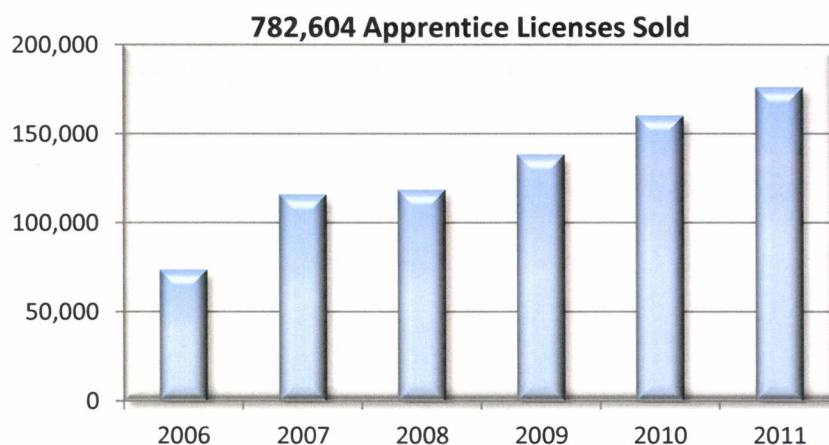
Over the past 30 years, the number of American hunters has been on a steady decline. This means less money for vital wildlife management programs and fewer mentors to pass along our hunting heritage. In addition, our community is growing older – which means we're running short on time to recruit and retain the next generation of American hunters.

The Families Afield program was established by the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance, the National Shooting Sports Foundation, and the National Wild Turkey Federation in 2005 in an effort to reduce and remove unnecessary barriers that impede the next generation of sportsmen and women from joining our ranks. Along with the National Rifle Association and the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, Families Afield legislation has been passed in 34 states resulting in more than 782,604 apprentice licenses being sold.

Apprentice Licenses:

The hallmark of the Families Afield program is the apprentice hunting license (also called "mentored" hunting). The creation of an apprentice hunting license allows a new hunter to safely try hunting under the watchful eye of an experienced adult mentor before completing a hunter education class. Mentors instill safety, ethics, and their passion for the sport in new hunters in a safe setting, while allowing the newcomer the thrill of the hunt.

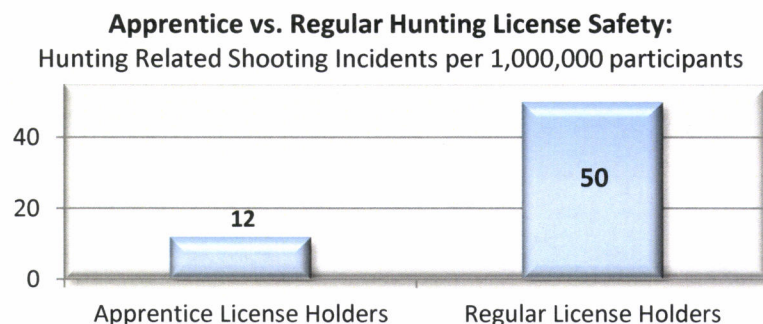
Apprentice Hunting Creates New Hunters:



* Apprentice Hunting Licenses Buyer Survey data compiled by Mile Creek Communications.

Apprentice Hunting Is Safe:

The safest hunter in the woods is the supervised youth hunter. In fact, Apprentice hunting has been shown to be more than 4 times safer than the general hunting population.



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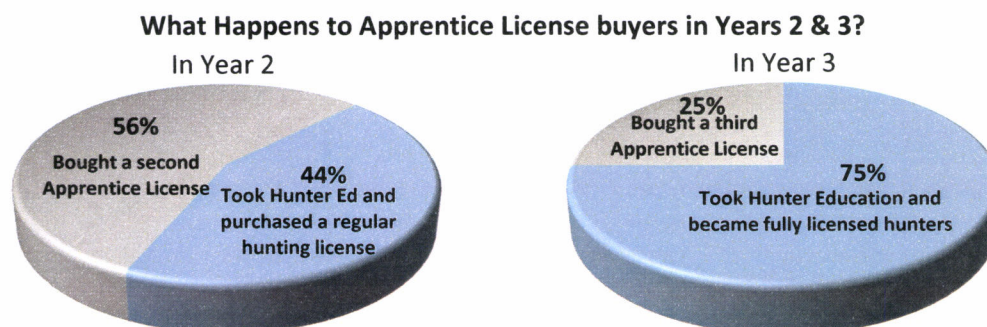
Apprentice Hunting Retains New Hunters:

Data from Ohio's Apprentice Hunting program shows that roughly half (47-52%) of all apprentice license buyers will be retained as hunting license buyers. This mirrors data from the Pennsylvania Game Commission that shows a 55% retention rate for their "mentored youth" program. With a 50% retention rate, Families Afield is not only one of the most successful recruitment programs available, it's also one of the most effective *retention* programs available to state wildlife agencies today.

Opponents say Families Afield Circumvents Hunter Education:

This couldn't be further from the truth. Instead, Apprentice hunting allows new hunters to *try* hunting before spending countless hours in a hunter education class. This "try-before-you-buy" concept allows mentors to instill safety, ethics, and their passion for the sport in new hunters in a safe setting while they get to experience the thrill of the hunt. *It's important to note that a component of each Families Afield bill is the requirement that prior to becoming a fully licensed hunter a newcomer must pass hunter education.*

Additionally, research from the Ohio Division of Wildlife shows that once Apprentice hunters are hooked, they voluntarily transition to becoming a fully licensed hunter by taking Hunter Education before it's required by law.

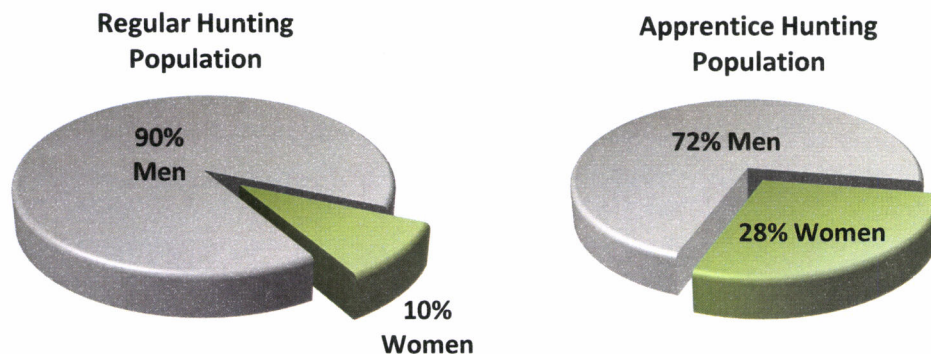


Data Compiled by: Ohio Division of Wildlife

In year two, nearly 1/2 of repeat license buyers (44%) took Hunter Ed when they could have continued to hunt on an apprentice license for two additional years. By year three, it jumps to 75%. This data demonstrates that Apprentice hunters are giving up the remaining years of eligibility for Apprentice licenses and transitioning to Hunter Education and regular hunting licenses.

Successfully Recruiting Women and Urban Hunters:

Data from Minnesota details the success Families Afield has had in recruiting non-traditional hunters – women and urban newcomers. In that study, nearly 30% of apprentice license buyers were women, a rate 3x greater than the general hunting population. Additionally, the data showed that 42% of apprentice license buyers came from urban locations compared to just 28% of the general hunting population.



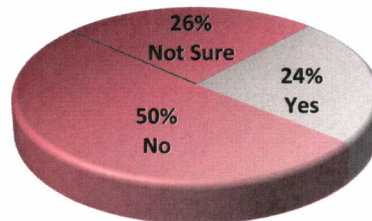
Data Compiled by: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Apprentice Hunting Isn't Needed – These Individuals Would Hunt Anyways:

Yes, while it is true that some individuals would end up hunting without an Apprentice hunting licenses, the vast majority would not. Research from Minnesota makes it clear that without Apprentice hunting to help recruit new hunters, those individuals would have not hunted.

In fact, only 24% of Apprentice Hunters responded they would have hunted without the Apprentice license.

Would you have hunted if the Apprentice Program did not exist?



Source: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - Apprentice Hunter Validation Survey

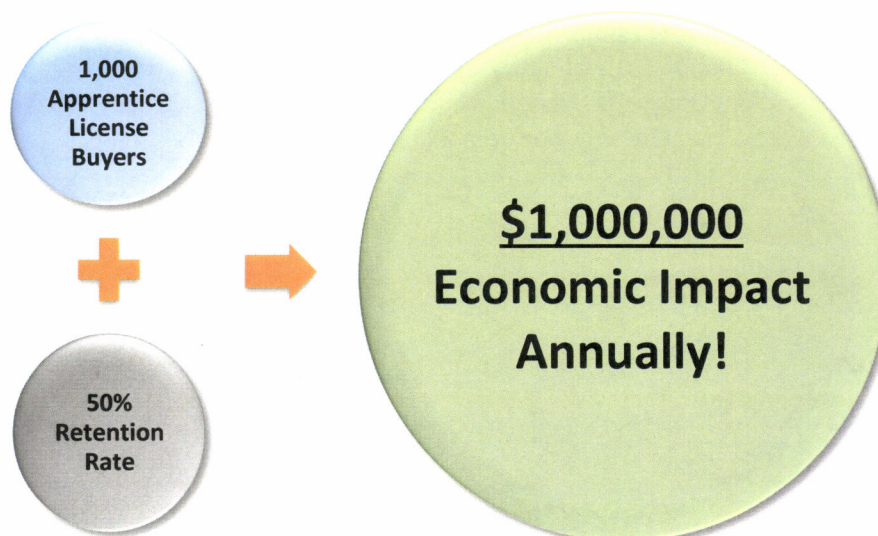
Financial Impact of Families Afield

With more than 782,604 new hunters, not only has Families Afield proven to be a safe and successful recruitment and retention tool, it packs a significant economic punch as well.

Research conducted by the National Shooting Sports Foundation in 2008, shows that the average hunter spends roughly \$2,000 per year on expenses related to hunting. This includes food, lodging, equipment, travel costs, licenses and more.

When combined with the Apprentice License Buyer retention data from Ohio, it is easy to appreciate the impact of the program. Families Afield has already produced an estimated economic impact just over three-quarters of a billion dollars – 782 Million per year! (And that number continues to grow as more states adopt the program.)

What Kind of Economic Impact Will Apprentice Hunting Have on My State?



About the Families Afield Program:

Families Afield was established by the *U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance*, the *National Shooting Sports Foundation*, and the *National Wild Turkey Federation* in 2004 in an effort to reduce and remove unnecessary barriers that impede the next generation of sportsmen and women from joining our ranks. Along with the *National Rifle Association* and the *Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation*, Families Afield legislation has been passed in 34 states resulting in more than 782,604 apprentice licenses being sold.

In Montana, the Families Afield coalition has been joined by:

Montana Chapters of Safari Club International

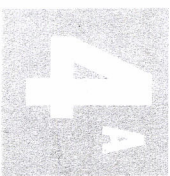
Montana Outfitters and Guides Association

Montana Sportsmen for Fish Wildlife

Montana State Chapter of Ducks Unlimited

National Wild Turkey Federation - Montana State Chapter

Mule Deer Foundation



WEDNESDAY
JANUARY 30, 2013

Opinion Desk: 447-4080
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**Independent
Record**
helenar.com

Opinion

Mentor hunting bill should pass

Many of us who grew up in the West have cherished memories of being afield with our parents and grandparents during hunting season.

It has long been a Western tradition to pass down a passion for hunting and the skills that go along with it. It's not just inheriting grandpa's old .22; it's learning to do things like he did them — walk the hills he walked, stalk game the way he did it and use his tricks when field dressing a clean kill.

It's hard not to feel that this tradition is more special in Montana than other areas of the country. Here, in a land where a ridgetop gets you a view unsurpassed in beauty, it's hard not to feel like our hunting traditions and heritage are closer to what they were intended to be.

And this passing on of tradition doesn't just start when a youngster gets a hunting license. It begins when children are young and exposed to the wonders of wildlife and the outdoors.

Unfortunately, this hunting tradition that so many of us remember is in a state of decline. Experts point to the urbanization of society and the numerous activities that draw the attention of kids these days — from video games to soccer practice. But whatever the reason, the number of hunters nationwide is declining. The most recent numbers from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service say that between 1991 and 2006 the number of all hunters fell by 11 percent. It's a troubling trend.

Last week a bill introduced in the Montana Senate by Scott

Belanger, R-Darby, aims to help turn that decline around. Senate Bill 197 would create an apprentice hunter certificate that would allow a child of any age hunt with a mentor who is at least 18 years old, taken hunter's safety and has a valid hunting license.

This law would allow parents to make the decision on when their child is old enough to hunt, not the state. Currently, Montana law states that a child must be 12 years old to legally hunt.

However, like any law, this one comes with its share of responsibility. Too many times we print articles about people breaking game laws while out hunting with their kids. This kind of behavior only indoctrinates a new generation of poachers. SB 197 isn't mean to be a chance for someone to put another deer or

elk in the freezer. And those who have that motivation are a detriment to the sport.

This law will provide grandparents more opportunities to pass on a cherished tradition to a new generation before their world is caught up in Facebook and video games. It will give a mother a chance to share with her son or daughter the responsibility and ethics of fair chase. It will give a dad the chance to teach his kids how to slowly release their breath while squeezing the trigger and about how getting too excited to actually take a shot is just part of learning to hunt.

There will be a hearing on Senate Bill 197 on Tuesday in the Senate Fish and Game Committee. For more information, search for SB 197 at leg.mt.gov.



**an
FR
VIEW**

**Bill to allow
mentor hunting
should pass**

Senate Bill 197 could offer children younger than 12 a chance to hunt with a mentor, which would provide an excellent chance to pass on Montana's rich hunting tradition to the next generation.

Reader's Alley

Oppose bills to privatize public schools system

Dressed up from the clumsy — at times ugly — presentations public school privatizers recently made in House

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www.tribunemedia.com/for-members





Scott Boulanger <elkhunter1964@gmail.com>

SB 197

1 message

Dan Johnston <johnston@victor.k12.mt.us>

Mon, Feb 4, 2013 at 10:10 PM

To: Scott Boulanger <elkhunter1964@gmail.com>, Scott Boulanger <scott@scottboulanger.com>

Dear Senator Boulanger, thank you for contacting me concerning SB 197. As I mentioned in our conversation, I do support the idea of master hunters mentoring younger hunters. Sadly today less and less Americans are hunters, I know of many young people who come from non-hunting parents, yet they still want to have the hunting experience. Our hunter safety laws make it impossible for almost anyone to hunt in Montana unless they have successfully passed hunter safety. SB 197 affords us the opportunity to expose more and more people to our heritage of hunting. We all know that after a positive experience in the field, these folks are hooked for life. We also know that the youth are our future and I believe that this bill will expose more young people to the out of doors who will potentially support and protect our hunting heritage. As a hunter safety instructor in Darby, I support this bill completely. I can see where the pre-hunter safety experience will heighten the understanding of the concepts taught in hunters safety as well as increase the interest and excitement. As a hunter safety instructor I see only benefits to the program by enhancing the outdoor opportunities.

Senator Boulanger, please share this email in support of SB197.

Thanks Dan

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Einstein on genius... "If you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will spend its life thinking it is stupid".

Dan Johnston
MS/HS Principal
Victor School. 425 fourth Ave
Victor, Montana
406-642-3221, 363-4891 cell

Hunters and Anglers in Montana

<u>License Year</u>	<u>Resident Anglers</u>	<u>Non-resident Anglers</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Resident Hunters</u>	<u>Non-resident Hunters</u>	<u>Total</u>
2010	238,942	154,184	393,126	192,384	43,237	235,621
2009	244,797	155,119	399,916	199,874	43,696	243,570
2008	237,070	152,812	389,882	199,738	45,812	245,550
2007	233,794	162,460	396,254	196,082	47,669	243,751
**2006	230,426	159,108	389,534	193,484	47,129	240,613
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2005	223,709	155,788	379,497	188,299	43,637	231,936
2004	222,634	156,618	379,252	190,034	42,835	232,869
2003	223,580	159,794	383,374	190,604	41,672	232,276
*2002	219,999	163,109	383,108	189,455	37,910	227,365
2000	228,782	146,250	375,032	205,395	74,332	279,727
1999	231,178	153,628	384,806	206,641	77,174	283,815
1998	227,924	149,744	377,668	204,949	75,433	280,382
1997	225,388	142,090	367,478	205,126	72,585	277,711
1996	230,202	141,894	372,096	211,750	72,947	284,697
1995	236,372	146,701	383,073	216,516	74,259	290,775
1994	240,713	149,107	389,820	220,109	75,042	295,151
1993	233,824	156,832	390,656	214,779	57,253	272,032
1992	230,089	148,871	378,960	212,209	54,077	266,286
1991	227,988	147,416	375,404	212,065	53,662	265,727
1990	235,166	151,701	386,867	224,003	35,353	259,356
1989	231,771	143,451	375,222	220,800	34,533	255,333
1988	233,683	134,842	368,525	222,397	33,841	256,238
1987	247,140	135,852	382,992	233,638	28,142	261,780
1986	250,006	129,376	379,382	235,369	27,433	262,802
1985	236,744	112,851	349,595	218,306	32,070	250,376
1984	232,036	104,098	336,134	222,185	32,070	254,255
1983	217,617	113,455	331,072	218,992	29,435	248,427

PRDJ-Summary

* Skipped 2001 due to A.L.S's ability to pull information without waiting a year
 ** Used 2006 data over again for 2007 due to the determination by Feds to wait one complete year for data.